

ILLUSTRATED WORKS.

Studies of Ornamental Design: by C. J. RICHARDSON, F.S.A., Author of "Architectural Remains of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James." &c. London: Weale, 1848.

MR. RICHARDSON has produced, unaided, a very charming and useful book, which deserves to have more buyers than we fear it will find at this moment. He has "fallen on evil times;" political and commercial changes have greatly affected the home market for such works, and in France and Germany, where, as we understand, the sale of his other books was considerable, few purchasers are now to be found. We mention this simply as a reason why those amongst us who have means and are personally interested in such works, or see their value in aid of the efforts now being made to adorn and enrich our manufactures, should the more quickly give to it their support and recommendation. It consists of eleven large plates (several of them coloured), including a longitudinal section, transverse section, and plan, of the Theatre of Parma, from some Italian drawings of a century or a century and a half old, now in the possession of the author. "Writers on the subject of theatres have attributed the design of this of Parma to Palladio and Bernini, to Giambattista and Aleotti. The drawings themselves, which, from the care bestowed upon their execution, must be considered as of good authority, give us the name of the architect, Donino Ferrari." It was built in 1619, and is very interesting, as forming a link between the revived classic theatre and that of modern form.

Stucco work from the circular saloon at the Villa Panfilii, Rome (built 1644, from the designs of Alessandro Algardi, a Bolognese sculptor); fresco ceiling in the Verospi palace, Rome (painted by Francesco Albano, at the end of the sixteenth century); a fine specimen of old Italian jewel embroidery; old English diapers; an ancient vase of blue and white glass found at Pompeii; and statuettes in silver, designed by the late Thomas Stothard, R.A., are the subjects of the principal plates. The preface plates include antique vases, and figures; and the title plate is from a part of a dish in Sir John Soane's museum. (How, (why, the author cannot tell) as Michelangelo's dish, forming an exceedingly elegant border.

The description of the plates includes an able and erudite essay on the Roman glass vase by Mr. Arthur Aschpittel. We cordially and strongly recommend the work.

The Preacher. Illuminated by Owen Jones. Longman and Co. 1849.

The Song of Songs. Illuminated by Owen Jones. Longman and Co.

"THE ALHAMBRA" has made Mr. Owen Jones's name everywhere synonymous with colours, gold, and decoration. He has created for himself a path of his own, and is walking it bravely. The books before us, which are in the missal style, displaying a varied border to every page, coloured capitals, and gilded initial letters, may take their stand amongst the most magnificent specimens of modern typographic achievements, and must be universally admired, even if their actual usefulness be doubted.

The author of a paper on "Ornamental Art applied to Ancient and Modern Bookbinding," read at one of the societies last season, observed that,—"Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, we have arrived at the greatest possible pitch of mechanical skill; and although we are unable at the present time to exhibit any very high standard of excellence in ornament, yet the improvements which have lately been made, and the attention which is now generally directed to ornamental art augur that it will not be long before we shall join artistic merit to our perfect execution. It will be said, that books are much better bound now than they were formerly. Granted. The mechanical execution is better—the books open more freely, are more truly folded, have the squares more even, the headbands much handsomer, and the sides and back richly enough gilt; but where is the ornamental art of the fifteenth century? Now and then we have good copies of the old designs re-produced, and occasionally a good original design, but we have no style whatever that is worth perpetuating."

This is too true, and not merely as to book-

covers,—but we must not forget one thing, and which is a characteristic of the age;—we have, by the mechanical skill alluded to, brought much that was once kept exclusively for the enjoyment of the rich within the reach of the multitude; and the works before us afford a good illustration of the truth of the assertion: they excel many ancient missals (we are not speaking of the first class) for which as many pounds have been paid as shillings are asked for these. The paper, ivory-like, and the bindings,—all concur to render these beautiful specimens of Mr. Owen Jones's art, in decorative typography, and of Messrs. Longman's enterprising liberality, most appropriate for presents at this joy-wishing and gift-giving period of the year.

L'Allegro and Il Penseroso. By JOHN MILTON; with Thirty Illustrations, designed expressly for the Art-Union of London. 1849.

THIRTY artists and eighteen engravers on wood have concurred to produce a truly beautiful edition of these immortal poems. Amongst the most successful drawings may be mentioned those by Mr. Frost, Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Leitch, Mr. Topham, Mr. F. Goodall, Mr. Tenniel, Mr. H. K. Browne, Mr. Armitage, Mr. Marshall, Mr. W. C. Thomas, Mr. Wehnert, Mr. Warren, Mr. Phillip, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. F. R. Pickersgill, Mr. Duncan, Mr. Hulme, Mr. E. M. Ward, and Mr. J. D. Harding. As specimens of wood-cutting, many of them have never been surpassed.

When it is remembered that in addition to this volume, each subscriber had for his guinea an excellent line engraving—"The Prisoner of Gisors," by Bacon, after Wehnert, and that after all more than half the amount of his subscription was applied in the purchase of paintings, bronzes, &c. distributed by lot amongst the subscribers generally, the advantages of this association, even in a commercial point of view, become strikingly obvious.

On the first day appointed for the delivery of the book, about eleven hundred copies were handed to applicants in the London office, and 6,000 copies, with as many engravings of the "Prisoner," reports, almanacks, prospectuses, receipts, &c., were sent simultaneously to the various local secretaries, to be spread east, west, north, and south, all over the united kingdom, and in our colonial dependencies. The extent and perfectness of this organization, the magnitude of its operations, and the amount of work involved in them, are scarcely comprehended beyond its own doors.

ON THE STUDY OF DESIGN, FROM PAINTINGS, &c., IN HAMPTON-COURT PALACE.*

IN noticing the great hall, the reader said that it was one of the most interesting places in the palace for the student. An interior of magnificent extent and proportions, the roof designed with the flowing freedom of the early revival, an oriel window elaborately constructed, with mullions, and intricately groined canopy, filled with beautiful tracery,—the music gallery and the tapestries each offer many lessons of a superior order. The details of the roof served to illustrate the difficulty of carrying out or continuing the spirit and purity of the style of a previous era in art, when the mind is impressed by the association of daily intercourse. In this case we may observe, it was said, the engrafting of a growing fashion upon an early and distinct class of design. The construction and design being in the manner prevalent at the end of the fourteenth century—gothic, and the details upon the spandrels and pendants, beautiful in themselves, but not in keeping, being Italian of the florid character of the sixteenth century,—it was pointed out that the taste which had directed the selection of one style, frequently permitted or introduced innovations which are justly considered by many to be inconsistent; yet without such innovations it was contended there could be no progress in art.

After describing several principal parts in the construction of this roof, it was stated that it had recently been repaired, and in the opinion of many beautified.

* The following is a continuation of the notice of Mr. Dwyer's paper. See p. 571, ante.

The reader said he was again perplexed to explain or conceive what had been intended in the singular application of colour and gilding upon this roof. He could not perceive the utility of working mouldings, sinking panels, introducing a deep hollow here, and a bold projection there,—of attempting to express well considered forms with light and shadow—when the decorator's man makes quirk's project by gilding, and dark parts of the picture light by paint—that which was solid, broad, and massive, to be cut up into lines, apparently on some such rule as "dot and carry one"—gild one member and leave the next, *ad infinitum*. The pendants, it was said, therefore resemble toys, and the spandrels appear in difficulties, under the mask they wear. Glitter and reflected light destroy projections, and the roof of oak is painted in other parts a puerile imitation of itself. He did not disapprove of gilding upon oak, if judiciously applied, as he considered it had been at the Madeleine at Paris. It was, however, an addition to be sparingly used in such a place as Wolsey's Hall, because the light upon the roof is reflected, and not a direct one. As a rule, it was said those parts may usually be gilded which contrast with other parts in shadow.

The tapestries then received attention. In eight large tableaux, within ornamental borders, they represented the history of Abraham. It was remarked that these are extraordinary productions of the loom, and defects may be attributed to the nature of the fabric, rather than to the designs which enrich it. They are rich in subject without being extravagant, and in some parts simple without being monotonous. Everything introduced appears to have a proper purpose, and to be carefully and artistically executed. They are of Italian origin, and the composition, details, and arrangement of the borders, give evidence that they belong to the period of Raffaele. After commenting upon the expression and dignity in the figures, the rich ornamental devices on the costumes, a chandelier of fine form, a coffer filled with elegant presents, in Cellini feeling, water-vessels, money-bags, and other Italian accessories, it was observed that artists at that period must have worked greatly in concert, and conjointly developed and multiplied beauties in art,—that it was an age of enthusiastic brotherhood; hence the difficulty in distinguishing, at all times, the particular artist,—that we owe much to the friendship which prompted them to bestow advice free from the dross of selfishness, to encourage the desire to learn, and to welcome success in others.

At the farther end of the great hall, is the withdrawing room. It has a ceiling with moulded ribwork, in geometrical device, bosses heralically emblazoned, and pendants of a good form. A fine oriel window is filled with modern stained glass, in tolerably good taste; there is a small portrait of the cardinal, painted on oak panel, above the fireplace, and the walls are hung with dark dingy-looking tapestry. Mr. Dwyer directed attention more especially to this tapestry, with its sombre groups, the ghosts of former beauties. Little, he said, at a first glance, serves to please the eye, or even to arrest the imagination. It is necessary to remain, to forget the gilded hall, and all outward things, to look only at the tapestries, and to think only of them. Nothing is satisfactorily known relative to their history, and they must be read, like many an old book without a title page, with suggestive doubtings. There are six tableaux, illustrating, allegorically, the influence of destiny, and the triumph of Virtue. The character of the composition is essentially German, of an early school. The figures are quaint and formal, the costume is simple, elegant, and carefully considered, and the arrangements of varied drapery, would not, it was remarked, have done discredit to the pencil of Flaxman. Many of the head-dresses are treated with much elegance. The armour displays a fine artistic feeling, and some of the helmets are elaborate, with bold and effective enrichments; but there is no distance—perspective being then unknown, or vaguely attempted. He thought that these tapestries were probably designed, early in life, by Albert Durer, whose great talents as a designer are well authenticated. His drapery was invariably well drawn. That he was an excellent ornamentist has been shewn by his engravings on wood and on copper, and the details of these